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DOCUMENTS

[Under this head it is proposed to print in each issue a few documents of historical importance, hitherto unprinted. It is intended that the documents shall be printed with verbal and literal exactness, and that an exact statement be made of the present place of deposit of the document and, in the case of archives and libraries, of the volume and page or catalogue number by which the document is designated. Contributions of important documents, thus authenticated, will be welcomed.]

1. Colonel William Byrd on Slavery and Indented Servants, 1736, 1739.

THE following two letters are taken from the letter-books of Colonel William Byrd, preserved at Lower Brandon, Va. For courteous permission to make use of them, the REVIEW is indebted to the owner of the letter-books, Mrs. Harrison of Brandon. The writer, the second Colonel William Byrd, of Westover (1674-1744), was the noted author of the *History of the Dividing Line*, the *Journey to the Land of Eden*, etc., and was for many years a member of the Governor's Council. The first Earl of Egmont (d. 1748), to whom the first of these letters was written, was the first president of the trustees of Georgia. He was the father of the second earl, who was for a time First Lord of the Admiralty, and grandfather of the Marquis of Hastings (Lord Rawdon). The first letter is dated Virginia, July 12, 1736, the second, November 10, 1739.

COLONEL BYRD TO LORD EGMONT.

. . . . Your Lord^{ps} opinion concerning Rum and Negroes is certainly very just, and your excludeing both of them from your Colony of Georgia will be very happy ; tho' with Respect to Rum, the Saints of New England I fear will find out some trick to evade your Act of Parliament. They have a great dexterity at palliating a perjury so well as to leave no taste of it in the mouth, nor can any people like them slip through a penal statute. They will give some other Name to their Rum, which they may safely do, because it gos by that of Kill-Devil in this country from its banefull qualitys. A watchfull Eye must be kept on these foul Traders or all the precautions of the Trustees will be in vain.

I wish my Lord we could be blest with the same Prohibition. They import so many Negroes hither, that I fear this Colony will some time or

other be confirmd by the Name of New Guinea. I am sensible of many bad consequences of multiplying these Ethiopians amongst us. They blow up the pride, and ruin the Industry of our White People, who seeing a Rank of poor Creatures below them, detest work for fear it should make them look like Slaves. Then that poverty which will ever attend upon Idleness, disposes them as much to pilfer as it does the Portuguese, who account it much more like a Gentleman to steal, than to dirty their hands with Labour of any kind.

Another unhappy Effect of Many Negroes is the necessity of being severe. Numbers make them insolent, and then foul Means must do what fair will not. We have however nothing like the Inhumanity here that is practiced in the Islands, and God forbid we ever should. But these base Tempers require to be rid with a tort Rein, or they will be apt to throw their Rider. Yet even this is terrible to a good naturd Man, who must submit to be either a Fool or a Fury. And this will be more our unhappy case, the more Negroes are increas'd amongst us.

But these private mischeifs are nothing if compar'd to the publick danger. We have already at least 10,000 Men of these descendants of Ham fit to bear Arms, and their Numbers increase every day as well by birth as Importation. And in case there should arise a Man of desperate courage amongst us, exasperated by a desperate fortune, he might with more advantage than Cataline kindle a Servile War. Such a man might be dreadfully mischeivous before any opposition could be form'd against him, and tinge our Rivers as wide as they are with blood. Besides the Calamitys which would be brought upon us by such an Attempt, it would cost our Mother Country many a fair Million to make us as profitable as we are at present.

It were therefore worth the consideration of a British Parliament, My Lord, to put an end to this unchristian Traffick of making Merchandize of Our Fellow Creatures. At least the farther Importation of them into our Colonys should be prohibited lest they prove as troublesome and dangerous everywhere, as they have been lately in Jamaica, where besides a vast expence of Money, they have cost the lives of many of his Majesty's Subjects. We have mountains in Virginia too, to which they may retire as safely, and do as much mischief as they do in Jamaica. All these matters duly consider'd, I wonder the Legislature will Indulge a few ravenous Traders to the danger of the Publick safety, and such Traders as would freely sell their Fathers, their Elder Brothers, and even the Wives of their bosomes, if they could black their faces and get anything by them.

I entirely agree with your Lord^p in the Detestation you seem to have for that Diabolical Liquor Rum, which does more mischief to Peoples Industry and morals than any thing except Gin and the Pope. And if it were not a little too Poetical, I should fancy, as the Gods of Old were said to quaff Nectar, so the Devils are fobbd off with Rumm. Tho' my Dear Country Men would think this unsavory Spirit much too Good for Devils, because they are fonder of it than they are of their Wives and Children,

for they often sell the Bread out of their mouths, to buy Rumm to put in their own. Thrice happy Georgia, if it be in the power of any Law to keep out so great an enemy to Health Industry and Vertue ! The new Settlers there had much better plant Vinyards like Noah, and get drunk with their own Wine. . . .

COLONEL BYRD TO MR. ANDREWS OF ROTTERDAM.

. . . . I know not how long the Palatines are sold for, who do not Pay Passage to Phyladelphia, but here they are sold for Four years and fetch from 6 to 9 Pounds and perhaps good Tradesmen may go for Ten. If these Prices woud answer, I am pretty Confident I coud dispose of two Ships Load every year in this River ; and I myself woud undertake it for Eight $\frac{1}{2}$ cent on the Sales, and make you as few bad Debts as possible. This is the Allowance Our Negro Sellers have, which Sell for more than Double these People will, and consequently afford twice the Profet.

2. Intercepted Letters and Journal of George Rogers Clark, 1778, 1779.

The following intercepted letters relating to the Illinois expedition of George Rogers Clark in 1778 and 1779 have been, through the courtesy of Dr. Douglas Brymner, archivist of the Dominion, obtained from the Canadian Archives, Series B, Vol. 122. It is understood that they have never before been printed. The first, Helm's letter to Clark, sent when Hamilton was approaching Vincennes, was captured by one of the Indian parties which Hamilton sent out for such purposes from the Wea village (Ouiatanon). The second is, for the events of the days beginning February 23, 1779, the earliest account hitherto discovered, and is thought, therefore, to be of importance. The manner of its interception is indicated in a letter from Clark to Governor Patrick Henry, dated April 29, and preserved among the manuscripts of the Department of State, in which he says: "A few days ago I received certain intelligence of Wm. Moires my express to you being killed near the Falls of the Ohio, news truly disagreeable to me, as I fear many of my letters will fall into the hands of the enemy at Detroit."

HELM TO CLARK.

Canadian Archives. Series B, Vol. 122, p. 250.

Dr Sir, At this time theer is an army within three miles of this place I heard of their comin several days before hand I sent spies to find the certainty the spies being taken prisoners I never got intelligence till they